Navy Occupational and Environmental Medicine

STATUS OF DOHRS-HC

DOEHRS-HC, A MATURING TOOL

(Updated 23 May 01)

The Defense Occupational and Environmental Health Readiness System (DOEHRS) is an automated information system designed to support the Hearing Conservation (HC), Industrial Hygiene (IH), and Occupational Medicine (OM) programs within the Military Health System (MHS). Only the Hearing Conservation module of this Health Affairs-funded system has been fielded to date.

DOEHRS-HC has taken its place as a standard tool for hearing conservationists and the occupational medicine community. Well into its second year of field use, it is now well established at Navy and other Service medical treatment facilities worldwide, including ships with on board test capabilities. While useful and productive, there remains much to be done before the system can fulfill its promise of enabling comprehensive medical surveillance and data analysis for noise exposed personnel. Here are some areas of interest and ongoing development:

Software development. Functional representatives of each Service have been meeting regularly to identify specific DOEHRS-HC requirements and existing shortfalls. A new software development contractor is working closely with us, and optimism is high. Hundreds of software change and software improvement requests have been received from the field, and each one was evaluated carefully. A prioritized list of "fixes" and enhancements was agreed upon, and remaining programming dollars will be allocated against that list to maximum benefit. Software Maintenance Release 3.0 will follow later this calendar year.

Integration with CHCS-II. The next version of DOEHRS-HC will be integrated within CHCS-II. Composite Health Care System–II will enable DoD-wide availability of health record information (current CHCS systems do not communicate with those in other geographical areas), will integrate dozens of separate databases (including DOEHRS), and will eventually result in the electronic outpatient record. This will likely be the first opportunity to achieve something approaching real-time access to audiometric data that was entered at another location.

Data Registry. The central repository for audiometric data (data registry or DR) is currently undergoing beta testing. When completed, the site will allow authorized personnel to query the database for threshold shift information, OSHA-reportable hearing loss, and compensation/disability costs associated with hearing impairment. The data can be sorted by person (SSN), UIC, service duty occupation code, pay grade, age, and similar useful categories. It is anticipated that queries of this sort will be available later this year. Ad hoc query capability is also planned, both from the central repository and against local databases.

Technician Training. NEHC will receive 17 complete DOEHRS-HC systems for training purposes sometime this summer. Intent is to establish a loaner pool at NEHC from which Navy Hearing Conservation Techniques Course Directors can obtain sufficient PC laptop-based systems to enable hands-on training of all students. A training curriculum will also be developed.

STS rates. A major area of interest has been the increase in threshold shifts that has accompanied conversion to DOEHRS-HC. Significant Threshold Shift among active duty personnel was 30-35% initially with DOEHRS-HC, and is now consistently below 30%. Civilian STS rates are continuing in the mid to high 30% range, with no explanation yet available. We will continue to monitor this situation. It is important to note that the great majority of personnel with STS on monitoring audiograms have their shifts confirmed by clinical audiologic evaluation. The most likely scenario for the increased STS is therefore a "catch up" situation, where shifts that previously went undetected are now being identified. STS rates are therefore likely to drop as baselines are re-established on an accurate basis.

Troubleshooting/feedback: It is critically important that users experiencing problems with their system contact the Tri-Service Medical System Support Center (TMSSC) at 1-(800)-981-5339 or DSN 240-4150. **TMMSC should always be the first contact whenever problems are experienced with DOEHRS-HC.** TMMSC is also the point of contact for suggestions for improvement in the system.

Information resources. The primary source for DOEHRS-HC information is http://dohrswww.apgea.army.mil/, which has the most current software updates available for download. You will need to obtain a password for most menu items. For current information and discussion of DOEHRS-HC issues, all users are urged to subscribe to DOEHRSHC@Listbot.com. Simply go to that website, enter your email address, select subscribe, and in short order, you'll receive a welcoming email from Listbot. Once you reply to that email, you're a member. A quick email addressed to doehrshc@listbot.com will reach more than 250 HC users, worldwide. Another valuable site for Navy-specific issues is the Navy Medical Information Management Center (NMIMC) website at http://imcenter.med.navy.mil.

We thank all DOEHRS-HC users for their helpful feedback and patience in the development of this system. A special thank you to Al Frost, DOEHRS Project Officer at Navy Medical Information Management Center (NMIMC), who has brought a tremendous amount of systems experience and energy to our team.

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The Navy DOEHRS-HC Team

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Contact Us

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Navy Environmental Health Center, Norfolk VA

webmaster

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7 February 2002

Subj: DOEHRS-HC SYSTEMS FOR HEARING CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN TRAINING

1. The Navy Environmental Health Center (NAVENVIRHLTHCEN) has DOEHRS-HC equipment (laptop computers and audiometers) available for training purposes. The systems are available for loan on a first come, first served basis. Reservations for this equipment are being made for CY 2002.

2. Procedures for borrowing the equipment are as follows:

    a. Firm notification of training dates must be coordinated with Mr. Ned Kramp, Hearing Conservation Training Coordinator, via e-mail (krampn@nehc.med.navy.mil). Beginning 12 February he may be contacted at our new telephone numbers and address provided below.

    b. Provide number of students to receive training. This will determine the number of systems to be loaned..

    c. Provide complete name, address and phone number of person to receive the equipment. Be sure to include street, building and zip code numbers.

    d. A signed copy of the loan agreement and hand receipt included in the shipment must be faxed back to NAVENVIRHLTHCEN immediately upon receipt.

3. The success of this program is contingent upon completion of all appropriate paperwork and the speedy return of properly functioning, packed and shipped equipment. Failure to return equipment in a timely manner will adversely impact loaning the equipment for subsequently scheduled training.

4. NEHC provides FEDEX funding and paperwork for the round-trip delivery. Should any equipment be returned damaged, the borrowing activity assumes responsibility for repair or replacement of items as necessary.

5. There are only 17 systems available for loan, typically one system per 2 students. Course directors are advised to schedule their courses as far ahead as possible to ensure equipment availability. Don't forget, also, that there is now a course fee for CAOHC approval. While we are negotiating a centrally pre-paid course fee arrangement, it is not yet in place and you should plan to have your command funds used until you hear differently. Information about CAOHC course fees is available at their web site: http://www.caohc.org/

6. On 12 Feb OEM will be moving to Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth. While the email address will not change, my new mailing address will be:

Mr. H. Ned Kramp
Navy Environmental Health Center
Occupational & Environmental Medicine Directorate
620 John Paul Jones Circle Suite 1100
Portsmouth, VA 23708-2130

New phone number: (757) 953-0774
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